

States of title to property as a result of previous erroneous surveys; and

(3) the term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture.

SEC. 3. CONVEYANCE OF LANDS.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary is authorized and directed to convey, without consideration, all right, title, and interest of the United States in an to affected lands as described in section 2(1), to any claimant or claimants, upon proper application from such claimant or claimants, as provided in section 4.

SEC. 4. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF CONVEYANCE.

(a) NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, claimants shall notify the Secretary, through the Forest Supervisor of the Plumas National Forest, writing of their claim to affected lands. Such claim shall be accomplished by—

(1) a description of the affected lands claimed;

(2) information relating to the claim of ownership of such lands; and

(3) such other information as the Secretary may require.

(b) ISSUANCE OF DEED.—(1) Upon a determination by the Secretary that issuance of a deed for affected lands is consistent with the purpose and requirements of this Act, the Secretary shall issue a quitclaim deed to such claimant for the parcel to be conveyed.

(2) Prior to the issuance of any such deed as provided in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure that—

(A) the parcel or parcels to be conveyed have been surveyed in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, dated November 11, 1989;

(B) all new property lines established by such surveys have been monumented and marked; and

(C) all terms and conditions necessary to protect third party and Government Rights-of-Way or other interests are included in the deed.

(3) The Federal Government shall be responsible for all surveys and property line markings necessary to implement this subsection.

(c) NOTIFICATION TO BLM.—The Secretary shall submit to the Secretary of the Interior an authenticated copy of each deed issued pursuant to this Act no later than 30 days after the date such deed is issued.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

The CHAIRMAN. Are there amendments to the bill? If there are none, under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. UPTON) having assumed the chair, Mr. HASTERT, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 440) to provide for the conveyance of lands to certain individuals in Butte County, CA, he reported the bill back to the House.

□ 1740

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. UPTON). Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Utah?

There was no objection.

TAOS PUEBLO INDIANS OF NEW MEXICO LAND TRANSFER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 51 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 101.

□ 1741

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 101) to transfer a parcel of land to the Taos Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, with Mr. HASTERT in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Utah [Mr. HANSEN] will be recognized for 30 minutes, and the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. RICHARDSON] will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah [Mr. HANSEN].

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 101, sponsored by Mr. RICHARDSON, which would transfer approximately 764 acres of the Wheeler Peak Wilderness, located in the Carson National Forest to the Secretary of the Interior to be held in trust for the Pueblo de Taos in New Mexico. This non-controversial legislation would settle a long standing issue over these religiously sacred lands between the Pueblo de Taos and the administration.

H.R. 101 insures that these lands will continue to be managed as part of the Blue Lake Wilderness but the Pueblo will be able to control access in order to insure privacy during certain religious ceremonies. This area is sacred to the Pueblo and a sacred trail known as the Trail of Life crosses this area.

H.R. 101 was reported favorably by the Committee on Resources on January 18, 1995, by unanimous voice vote. This same measure passed the House during the 103d Congress but failed final passage in the waning hours of business. I commend the ranking member, Mr. RICHARDSON, for his hard work on this measure and I urge the Members of the House to support his effort.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. RICHARDSON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Chairman, today is an important day for the Taos Pueblo people. Today, the House will again consider legislation to transfer a sacred tract of wilderness land back to the Taos Pueblo.

The so-called bottleneck tract of the Wheeler Peak Wilderness will be transferred by this bill to management by the Taos Pueblo as the final, missing part of the Blue Lake Wilderness.

In an age when Federal policies affecting the first Americans are becoming more and more controversial, H.R. 101 is a simple, noncontroversial solution to an age-old problem on which I hope we can all agree.

My legislation will return the last remaining land tract in the Blue Lake Wilderness to its rightful owners, the Taos Pueblo Indians.

In 1970, when President Nixon signed the original Blue Lake Wilderness authorizing legislation, the "bottleneck" tract was excluded.

At that time, the acreage was needed to create the adjacent Wheeler Peak Wilderness which would have fallen below the minimum acreage requirement necessary for wilderness creation.

Now, 25 years later, this tract is no longer needed to qualify the Wheeler Peak Wilderness for designation. Now, we have the opportunity to close the last chapter in a decades-long quest by the Taos Pueblo to gain the return of one of their most sacred sites.

The bottleneck tract has been used for hundreds of years by the Taos Pueblo people as a sacred religious area for ceremonies, pilgrimages and other private observances.

Unfortunately, as the area has not been included in the Blue Lake Wilderness, the Pueblo has been powerless to prevent public intrusions in the area during their sacred rituals.

With the transfer of the land to management as wilderness by the Pueblo, the bottleneck lands would be used for traditional purposes only, such as religious ceremonies, hunting, fishing, and as a source of water, forage for domestic livestock, wood, timber and other natural resources.

H.R. 101, which is similar to legislation which passed the House in the last Congress, is supported by the bipartisan New Mexico congressional delegation and a broad coalition of local and national environmental groups.

Identical legislation has been introduced in the Senate by Senators PETE DOMENICI, JEFF BINGAMAN, and BOB DOLE.

Mr. Chairman, it is time to bring final justice to the Taos Pueblo by returning this land to their management.

It is time to close one more sad chapter in the long history of U.S. Government relations with native American peoples.

It is time to pass H.R. 101 and enact it into law.